

# EXHIBIT 11



**September 5, 2012**

## **Facts about Voluntary Homeless Feeding Registration Program *City of Houston Clarifies Misinformation***

### **Is the City of Houston trying to stop homeless food service?**

No! The City of Houston is trying to improve the quality, quantity and distribution of food for the homeless through training and coordination.

#### **Introduction:**

In the spring of 2012, the Houston City Council approved an ordinance establishing a voluntary program to coordinate outdoor food service operations for the homeless. The intent of the ordinance is threefold:

1. to improve the quality, quantity and distribution of food provided outdoors;
2. to expand the opportunities for the homeless to connect with service providers;
- and
3. to reduce the disproportionate environmental impact of food service operations on public and private property.

The program consists of four basic steps:

1. Registration of the formal or informal food service organization. Registration includes contact information, proposed schedule, location and proposed food to be served.
2. Free food handling training for one or more members of the food service group provided by the Houston Department of Health and Human Services. The training also includes information from the Coalition for the Homeless about working with the homeless and referral information for additional services needed by the homeless.
3. The only mandatory step is a requirement to obtain owner consent before using either public or private property for food service of more than six people. This is required for both registered and non-registered food service operations.
4. Coordination of location and times of food service to maximize the distribution of food throughout the week.

The ordinance was the result of months of discussion among various city departments, homeless service agencies, law enforcement, homeless food service organizations and private property owners and managers.

To date, program managers at the Houston Department of Health and Human Services report:

- 8 approved organizations/individuals (All eight of these groups are using city-owned property for their food service events.)
- 11 pending organizations/individuals (awaiting property owner consent)
- 18 organizations/individuals have made inquiries but have not submitted the Participation Form

In addition, Mayor Annise Parker has designated the Central Houston Public Library Plaza, 500 McKinney, Houston 77002, as an approved charitable food service location for Food Not Bombs.

Forms, procedures, the ordinance, class schedules and updated registrants can be found at <https://www.houstontx.gov/health/Charitable/index.html>

### **Frequently Asked Questions:**

#### **Why does the City of Houston want to register charitable food service of the homeless?**

First and foremost, the City of Houston wants to ensure that homeless individuals have sufficient wholesome food to meet their needs. Because of the previous lack of coordination, too much food was distributed on weekend mornings to certain locations over-serving a group of people while no food was available at other times of the day and days of the week. Hopefully, enough organizations will register and, through coordination, the city can improve the safety and availability of more food for the homeless. In addition to coordination, participants in the voluntary registration program commit to manage their litter.

#### **Why do I need permission to provide food on public property?**

Public property belongs to all of us and it needs to be shared equitably. Large scale or recurring activities of all kinds already require permission for use of public property. It is unlikely that a food service organization will be denied permission to use public property, but it may need to be coordinated with other public activities.

#### **Do I have to participate in the voluntary program if on private property?**

No. Food service activity conducted on one's own property is not covered by the ordinance. There is no penalty for food service operations outside of the voluntary registration program. However, all feeders, in or out of the voluntary registration program must obtain permission to operate on public or private property.

#### **Does anyone support this ordinance?**

Participants have been surprised to learn in some cases their food service activities were being duplicated and their food was being discarded by the homeless. Organizations attending the food service training classes report that they never realized how complicated the problem of homelessness was and they are grateful for the training about food and services. Participants have also recognized that the opportunities to provide food are not restricted to downtown; their services are also needed in other areas of the city and county. Organizations that conduct food service inside their facilities appreciate the coordination of volunteers and the fact that the volunteers are more informed about referral possibilities. The homeless themselves report more confidence in the safety of the food from the registered providers. Property managers in some of the hardest affected areas of town report slight improvements since the initiation of the program July 1, 2012.

#### **How do I get permission for use of City of Houston property?**

Contact Carolyn Gray at [Carolyn.gray@houstontx.gov](mailto:Carolyn.gray@houstontx.gov) or call her at 832.393.5100.

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